FIRST ISSUE
1
$ 1.50
FANTASTIC FANZINE
WOW!

Ye Good Ol' Editors Page

Welcome to the first issue of **FANTASTIC FANZINE!** For some of you this will be your first exposure to the 'zine, others may remember it from its premiere back in 1984. The first volume lasted some thirteen issues. The second volume only had a first issue and was canceled, as all of our publication efforts and time went into our then successful **ARROW COMICS** line of books. The **FANTASTIC FANZINE** originated in1984 when Stuart Kerr, Robert Knight, and I stumbled across an old fanzine published by a neighbor of mine (Tim Gasco... Where are you now?) back in 1976 called FANTATIC FAN SCENE (see picture this page) Stuart had actually done a story called "Jaspenia" in the first issue. However the first issue was also the last ever to appear. Anyway, after we had our little nostalgia trip looking over the 'zine we'd found, it was decided that since nobody was doing any local publications dealing with comics at the time we'd give it a shot.

And so, our first issue was printed on newsprint, released and distributed free at a local KING KON convention, hosted by Gary Reed, future CALIBER PRESS publisher. When we saw our final effort, we all jumped in celebration... beer cans were popped. At the same time, we all knew there was major improvements to be made if we wanted our little 'zine to grow and flourish. Our second issue came out in late '84. It was reduced to comic book size format with all the work still being done by Stuart, Robert, and myself. While attending a local comic con we ran across Tim Dzon and Jim Miller. They agreed to do a CORONA story for us and do some art for future issues. Issue three supported a POWER PACK cover beautifully illustrated by Tim Dzon (Who's now inking for Marvel and DC). Suddenly people started to take notice of us. However, Robert had left to pursue other ventures. Soon, Randy Zimmerman (Check out his great cover for this issue!!!), showed interest in contributing some material. Now of course he the mastermind behind MASSIVE COMICS and TALES FROM THE ANIVERSE. So by issue four, we switched printers and went to a white paper stock for better reproduction. William and Nadine Messner-Loebs met us and gave their positive feedback to encourage us to continue. Bill's JOURNEY cover which graces our fourth issue still remains one of my favorites. TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE...

Editor: Ralph Griffith

Ralph L. Griffith

Special Thanks to :
Eugene W. Perecki

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AFTER FOLLOWING SPACE PIRATES TO THE PLANET ER-10, MARSHALL WILLIN IS ATTACKED FROM BEHIND.
by Don Bagan
THEY'RE CLOSING.. CRAP! I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THIS IS GOING...
WHAPP!
DAW!
GOT TO TRY AND SET DOWN ON THE WATER!
OUCH! OH MY ACHIN' BUNNS...
PLOP!

WE'D BETTER LAND AND MAKE SURE!
ARE YOU SURE?
WE GOT HER! DAM BITCH SPACE MARSHAL!
DO YOU SEE WHERE SHE CRASHED?
SHE CRASHED IN THE WATER...OVER TO YOUR LEFT!
THESE LAZERS WILL BURN HER ASS..HE..HE HE--HE...
I SEE SOMETHING OVER THERE!

DIRTY BASTARDS!
CLICK
CLICK
PA-TOM! PA-TOM!
PA-TOM PA-TOM PA-TOM
PA-TOM PA-TOM PA-TOM

IF I CAN GET TO THAT ROCK...
COME ON YOU BASTARDS... COME AND GET IT!
THERE BY THE ROCK...
PATOOM! PATOOM!
PATOOM! PATOOM!

WE GOT HER NOW.
SHOULD WE BLAST HER? .. OR HAVE A LITTLE FUN...
PARTY TIME!
ZAPPP-P!
SORRY GUYS NOT TO DAY...

SO MUCH FOR THAT...
DAM! EVERY TIME... I LOOSE A SHIP... AND NO PRISONERS
RIGHT WHERE THEY LEFT THEM... SURE THEY WON'T MIND IF I BORROW ONE.
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LETTERS

Okay, folks, this is it. Our first issue in the new era of FANTASTIC FANZINE. What did you think? What is your opinion on our 'zine? Not enough art or text? What's your view on the strips run within its pages?

I guess what I'm getting at is, that we, here at FF, need to know how we can make our 'zine better. One of the things I loved about reading most other fanzines was the letters pages. Not just letters on what you like or did not (although we need those also just to ensure we are doing a quality product), but letters dealing with other aspects the industry and life all around us. Some of the best ideas and debates are carried on in the letters pages of most fanzines. Where else do you hear about publisher, creative talents, dealers and retailer complaints or suggestions. So come on, draw out the rusty pens and yellowed paper and drop us a line hear at ol' ARROW COMICS HQ. We're waiting to hear from you.

JUST BITCHIN'

They say "it's who ya know." Ralph Griffith (ever after referred to in any of my columns simply as "Ralph") and I have been close friends for a decade and a half and were business partners in Arrow Comics a few years ago. Ralph had been musing about getting back into this fanzine publishing business. He had been doing so for some time, really since the demise of that aforementioned fledgling comic book company. Naturally, when the time was right and he was ready to put his dreams into action, he approached me about writing various columns for his new venture. He gave me virtually free rein over topics, content and style. I couldn't refuse.

In future columns, I'll write about music, films, comics, politics, social issues, pet peeves and whatever else I feel like at the time. I would like to get some response to my ramblings or ravings, so drop me a line Stuart Kerr 9360 Tobine Road, Romulus, MI 48174. Something you want to bitch about? Good. A suggestion for a future column? Good, too.

Here's one: Concert reviews. If you've been to a recent show or want to reminisce about a particularly memorable one from years past, write it out in 100-300 words and send it in. Remember, this is a fanzine and fan input is not only essential, it's *mandatory*.

We'll be back in about six weeks, so get going!

Music Review

THE CRAMPS

"LOOK MOM NO HEAD"

By : Gary E. Bishop

This is some good rip roaring punk fromagroup that has played together since 1976. I've never been real big into the punk scene, but I loved this entire release. Some of the lyrics mixed with a classic punk sound crossed with rockablity, and instrumental rock sound just came alive for me. Songs like "Dames, Booze, Chains and Boots", "Miniskirt Blues" featuring Iggy Pop, "I Wanna Get in Your Pants", "Eyeball in My Martini" and "Wilder Wilder Faster Faster", a CD Bonus track, are hilarious and well produced by their guitarist Poison Ivy.

The rest of the band consists of lead singer Lux Interior, bass player Slim Chance, and drums by Jim Sclavinos. And they have a definite punk look. Based on the cover picture there is only one male scene and only one female, then two men looking like women. This is definitly a punk band that lives up to their dream of sixteen years.If you like punk or just enjoy fun music, pick this one up it's a classic.

DAMIEN'S 1 DEN

Hey!

Let me introduce myself, I'm Brian Damien. I'm that guy that sneered at you at the last convention. That guy who's been following comics for the last two decades. That guy who's got a lot to get off his chest about the art form that he knows and loves a lot. So listen up, because this is *how it is*.

First off, I love comics. I've lived and breathed comics ever since I could read. I was one of the few kids on the block who could tell you the entire roster of the Legion Of Substitute Heroes (may they rest in peace, PLEASE!). I grew up with fading memories of the Batman TV show, The Superman Aquaman Hour, and reruns of Space Angel.

Comics sure have come a long way since then. Some would like to think that they've grown up, matured into "adult literature", even the comics have "come of age" in the 90's. Those are the optimistic idiots who not only have their heads up their butt, but the also feel that GREEN ARROW is "high quality".

Friggin' Idiots!

Comics are as mature as the thirteen year old boy that gets caught behind the barn searching for one fisted enlightenment from a copy of Playboy.

To put it in simple English, comics are currently suffering from "raging hormones", and a BAD case of puberty.

Oh sure, you have your bright spots, your prodigies, your flickers of hope: Maus (!), The Watchmen, Elfquest, Cerebus..., but these are merely glimmers of genius, sparks that deceive, because it changes nothing overall. It just makes me more frustrated over how important, while at the same time how overlooked, this artform has become.

Despite these small sparks, nothing in comics ever changes; Punisher still kills, X-Men still drown in their own blood and soap-opera inspired excrement, D.C. (while showing the most adaptability for change) still trips over itself to follow the last "hot" trend Marvel had, and the alternatives and independents lose more and more popularity every day (despite any originality and uniqueness that they may show), In comics nothing ever really changes, it just mutates into a darker form.

I said earlier that comics suffer from puberty. I mean that sincerely. Just look at the stands and tell me it doesn't. Comics are constantly catering to the lovers of immature violence and titillation- blood and\or big boobs.

Even those companies that are fighting to be intelligent, and even entertaining, are being drowned out by companies trying to stumble onto new gimmicks to sell their "stapled together trading cards" (Gosh Tom, who cares if it tells a story, just have Neal put a glow in the dark cover on it, and have bob put in a few trading cards, and it'll sell big time!!") "Immature, oversexed, ultraviolent, inclusive, narrow minded, narrow marketed, closed minded, unoriginal, non- structured, badly executed, out of proportioned, over gimmicked, PIECES OF TRASH!!"

But I love'em anyway!

So instead of bitchin' and moanin' at everybody, here's what I'm gonna do with these pages that these FANTASTIC FANZINE folks have given me. I'm gonna tell you about comics: what's happening, as well as what SHOULD be happening. What's the deal, and what's the scandal. I refuse to just sit here complainin', so I'm gonna be doing some suggestin' and demandin; too!

I'll be breaking down the comic producing companies and giving you opinions and advice. I'll tell you about controversies, rumors, motivations, politics, and the sheer dumb luck things that help make up this artform that I know and love so well. Quite frankly, I'll be telling you how comics ARE and how they SHOULD BE.

I know this isn't going to please all of you out there but, what the hell, most of you probably like Punisher (I hear they are talking about turning him oriental next year to help kick off the new "Shang Chi" series), and you think D.C. is the hot new motivator in comics (they have plans to bring back "Brother Power, The Geek" - I've seen their promo announcement)!

So keep reading this rag and we'll explore comics together. Write me to let me know if you agree, or disagree, and especially if there is a scandal that needs investigating, and/or brought out in the open. Hell, we may even work our way past the blood and boobs!

Later,

Brian Damien

(That's Mr. Damien to you, punk!)

LINDYJAX
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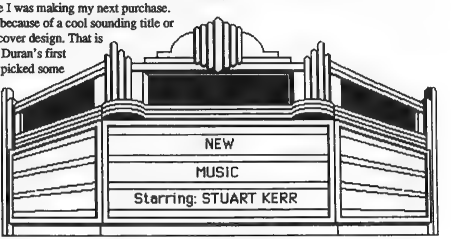
MMM... IT'S SO GOOD TO HAVE YOU NEXT TO ME!
IT IS NICE TO BE HELD BY YOU.
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED YOU HERE
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG TO ASK?
I DON'T KNOW. SCARED, I GUESS.
I GET SCARED LIKE THAT TOO, SOMETIMES.
I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU TOO.
I WISH THIS MOMENT COULD GO ON FOREVER!
ME TOO!
THERE'S ONLY ONE MORE THING I WISH.
I WISH YOU WERE REAL.
OH? WHAT'S THAT?
FOOP!

I remember seeing the Sex Pistols on Sixty Minutes back in 1976 when I was sixteen. My parents were incredulous and outraged, but it didn't have much affect on me at the time. I was still heavily into Foghat, Rick Derringer, J. Geils, REO and AC/DC (with Bon Scott. Brian Johnson's pretty good, but Bon was unique), along with all that stuff now known as "classic rock". It wasn't until that dream-state called high school was over and I started hanging around with a new crowd out of Ann Arbor, a quintessential college town, that I discovered the vastness and variety of music outside of my limited view.

It started, innocently enough, with the likes of Devo and the B-52's, moving on to The Clash, Adam Ant, Duran Duran and the English Beat. I frequented Wazoo, a State Street used record store, usually spending about twice what I had intended and leaving with an armload of records (we're talking vinyl, here), some of which never even made it to the turntable before I was making my next purchase.

I would choose an album because of a cool sounding title or band name, or an interesting cover design. That is how I came to pick up Duran Duran's first album on the Harvest label. I picked some bands simply because I had heard of them, whether or not I'd actually heard their music. To tell the truth, if an album was under three bucks, that was a bonus in its favor. None of this stuff was I hearing on the radio.



That was a part of the charm many of those groups had for me. Most of my friends had never heard of them. Secretly, I was a bit glad when they usually didn't even like most of the stuff when I shared it with them. That made it all the more mine; it was written and performed for me, its messages were directed at me personally. Cliche: I could relate to the stuff.

The party days of 78-82 eventually came to an end, but not so my love of New Wave and Post Punk. There were a few radio shows and the occasional public or campus station that featured new music, and I frequented the City Club, an alternative dance bar in downtown Detroit. My collection grew. I added the Smiths, New Order, Depeche Mode, The The, and Violent Femmes (the Femmes have ranked consistently in my personal top five ever since). By 1987, I had very nearly abandoned Radio altogether, turning inward to just my own collection of records and tapes.

About a year ago, I came across a Windsor-based radio station, 88.7 FM. The Mix played a more varied version of Top 40, but, from 7PM to 2AM, they broadcast "The Cutting Edge", an Alternative Music show. Greg St. James hosted the first half of the show and eventually changed the station to a 24- hour Alternative music format. Once again my buying sprees began. Charlatans UK, Pursuit of Happiness, Lenny Kravitz, Jesus Jones and Cocteau Twins joined the list. Musically, it was a happy time for me.

When the new format was announced, I wrote to the station, praising the move and also warning them of becoming an "Alternative Top 40." Spontaneity and freedom for the deejay was what I was looking for, to be pleasantly surprised whenever I tuned in. Alas, I am already becoming disillusioned with 89X as it is now known, for the former won out over the latter. I should have expected no less. Business is business, after all.

Speaking of Nirvana, I was both amazed and dismayed by the band's meteoric success. They are a decent band, true, but they are a definite product. A story in a recent Newsweek told of record companies in a "feeding frenzy" over Punk bands since the success of Nirvana. When "Smells Like Teen Spirit" debuted, it was played heavily by 89X. That's about the time I again began spending more time with my records and tapes (yes, by neccesity, I have switched over to the tape format), than listening to the radio.

To be fair, when I do listen to the radio, it usually is 89X. The Classic Rock of my teens is not a passion for me now. It has reached the status of fondness and respect with a touch of nostalgia, but it just isn't what I feel like listening to at this time in my life. Alternative is fresh and exciting, sometimes enlightened and sometimes just for fun. And somehow, it makes me feel optimistic. So, whether radio or recordings, Alternative is what I listen to nowadays. I simply need more than one source for it.

Treasures are worth digging for. I'm going to spend more time at the used record (who am I kidding - cassette and CD) shops experimenting again. I want to find those songs written just for me. In future issues I'll share them with you.

So, ya say ya wanna get published, eh? Well, FANTASTIC FANZINE is looking for a few good artists writers, inkers, and letterers to help fill its pages. All contributions will be used as space permits. Also FANTASTIC FANZINE will be used as a training ground for new talent, with selected individuals assigned to work on upcoming ARROW COMICS projects.

There are a few things we're looking for pronto. Comic Book reviews are always enjoyed, so anyone doing reviews will be a great help. We're also looking for comic book character profiles and/or, histories. We will try to run interviews with comic book creators as well. It's time to start "pinging" away at all those typewriters people.

We also need any one to seven page completed stories or illustrations to publish. If you feel like just sending in a sample xerox of pencils or inks, please do so. We keep everything on file and may be able to match you up with other talented individuals to try get a finished product in publication.

We also need new *logos* for many of our columns, so letterers out there, let's see what you can come up with. Good letterers are hard to find (or is that "hard letterers are good to find?")

One final note on submissions; please, remember to put you, name, address and phone number on every piece submitted.

Now the sad part... no payment is involved for anything published here at FANTASTIC FANZINE. However, contributors will receive at least one to three free copies of the fanzine in which their submissions were published. This amount will depend on the amount contributed.

In addition, complementary copies of FANTASIC FANZINE will be sent to the other major and independent publishers and distributors. Of course, since plans are afoot to revive the ARROW COMICS line, there is a good chance most of our talent will come from the contributors of FANTASTIC FANZINE.

Remember, this fanzine is here to help you get published, fine tune your skills, have some fun, meet some people, and hopefully entertain. But for that to happen you have to get involved. So like the ad slogan says, "JUST DO IT!"

Send all contributions to: FANTASTIC FANZINE C/O ARROW COMICS
37452 HURON RIVER DR. ROMULUS, MICHIGAN 48174

FROM THE DEPTHS OF LEGEND RISES A HERO BORN OF MAGIC, FORGED FROM FABLED STEEL...

EXCALIBUR

THE WET ENGLANDISH MIST BLANKETS VAST SALISBURY PLAIN, WHERE STONEHENGE SITS. WHAT WAS ONCE A PLACE OF WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE NOW ONLY WAITS FOR SPECTATORS EAGER TO GLIMPSE THE STONE RELIC OF A DISTANT AGE.
YET ONE PERSON STANDS HERE IN WORSHIP. THE CREASES OF BROODING SEEM OUT OF PLACE ON HIS CHILDLIKE FACE. HIS CLENCHED FISTS PORTRAY A FIGURE TORTURED WITH DOUBTS.
CUCHULAIN, FINN, ARTHUR. ALL CHAMPIONS OF LONG AGO, ALL MEN OF COURAGE AND PURPOSE. IN DEED AND HONOR CAN I HOPE TO MATCH THEM? THIS IVE BEEN RAISED TO DO, AND YET BEFORE SO SACRED A PLACE OF MY PEOPLE I FEEL INSIGNIFICANT. I'D BE PREFERRING TO RETURN HOME, WHERE MENTOR WOULD TELL ME STORIES BESIDE THE FIRE. IT'S FAR FROM FAIR THAT SO HEAVY A BURDEN BE GIVEN TO ME WITHOUT ASKING.

BROODING, ANGUS? I THOUGHT YOUR KIND WAS INCAPABLE OF THAT. I THOUGHT YOU JUST ATE, DRANK AND MADE MERRY.
WHA..! SHOW YERSELF FROM THOSE SHADOWS AND EXPLAIN YER RUDE WORDS AND UNWANTED INTERRUPTION!
A DRUID! YER COCKY TO CHALLENGE ME ALONE, HERE WHERE MY POWER PEAKS!
MY POWER, TOO, REVELS IN THESE ANCIENT MONUMENTS.
ENOUGH POWER, CHILD, TO DO THIS!
THE DRUID RAISES HIS HANDS IN A MYSTIC GESTURE, AND ALL AROUND EXCALIBUR THE UNCANNY OCCURS.
THE BOULDERS OF STONEHENGE, HAVING STOOD FOR COUNTLESS AGES AS SILENT OBSERVERS, NOW ANIMATE AS A DEADLY PERIL.
GODS!!

STUNNED AT FIRST, EXCALIBUR BARELY ESCAPES THE SWEEP OF A MASSIVE GRANITE HAND.
OW! THIS DRUID OF EVIL HAS POWER! IT CAN ONLY MEAN THAT HIS KIND SEEKS TO MAKE THEIR MOVE, AND I BE THEIR FIRST VICTIM!
YOU COMMAND THE STONE, DRUID, BUT I HAVE POWERS TO COUNTER!
HANDS THRUST FORWARD, A BLINDING HEATLESS FLAME SURGES FORTH AND PENETRATES AGE-OLD STONE.
THE DRUID WINCES, BUT STARES ON THE CONTINUED MANIPULATION OF HIS ARCANE HENCHMEN.
ENFLAMED WITH THE PASSION OF YOUTH AND JOY OF POWER UNLEASHED, EXCALIBUR SPRINGS ALMOST PLAYFULLY INTO BATTLE, TOO LITHE AND QUICK FOR THE STONE MONSTERS TO STRIKE.

KZAK!
HO HO! I DANCE A JIG ABOUT THESE STONE DEMONS AS IF THEY BE AS IMMOBILE AS BEFORE. I'LL SOON CHISEL THEM DOWN TO NOTHING.
POW
UGH!
THEN YE'LL BE FACING ME ALONE, DRUID...
I'M...CAUGHT! DAGDA BLESS ME, I'VE NO WISH TO DIE!
YOU PLAY THIS LIKE SOME FANCIFUL GAME, BOY, AS ALL YOUR KIND DO. THAT IS WHY YOU WERE CONQUERED AND DRIVEN OFF BY HUMANS LONG AGO; AND THAT IS WHY YOU SHALL FAIL TODAY!

AYE, TIS NO GAME, DRUID. HERE I DALLY WITH PAWNS SUCH AS YERSELF WHILE THE TRUE OPPONENT IS YET TO BE DEALT WITH. YE BE RIGHT, I HAVE NO TIME TO PLAY GAMES. AND SO I'LL END THIS...
...NOW!
EVEN AS THE DRUID FALLS UNCONSCIOUS TO THE GROUND, THE SCATTERED DEBRIS OF STONEHENGE SHIMMER AND PULL TOGETHER, RE ASSUMING THE SHAPES AND POSITIONS THEY HAD HELD FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

HA! NO ONE COULD EVER GUESS THAT THESE STONES HAD BUDGED A HAIRS LENGTH, MUCH LESS COME ALIVE TO DO DEATH UPON ME. WAS THE DRUIDS SPELL ONLY ILLUSION?
NAW, YE'LL BE SPORTING BRUISES SOON A HURLEY PLAYER'D BE PROUD OF. 'TWAS THE POWERS OF STONEHENGE HERSELF THAT RETURNED IT SUCH.
MENTOR?
DID YA SEE? WAS MY FIRST CHRIST, AND I WON!
THAT YE DID, SON. THOUGH WAS RAW POWER AND THE DRUIDS OVERCONFIDENCE THAT WON THE DAY, NOT YER BRAINS. YE'LL NEED TO LEARN TO USE CRAFT IF YER TO BEST THE DARK DRUID HIMSELF.
MENTOR, 'TIS NOT YET EXPLAINED TO ME WHAT IS GOING ON. IF I'M TO FACE THE DARK DRUID, I'VE A RIGHT TO KNOW. I'VE GROWN UP WITH GREAT POWER AND BEEN GIVEN A NAME TO REPRESENT IT. I'VE USED THIS POWER TODAY, AND I'LL NOT BE USING IT AGAIN TILL ALL'S BEEN EXPLAINED!
THE TINY ELDER CALLED MENTOR STARES AT HIS PUPIL WITH A MIXTURE OF PRIDE AND SORROW.
AYE, ANGUS EXCALIBUR. THE DRUIDS ARE A GREAT EVIL, THOUGH THEY WERE NOT ALWAYS SO. AND THERE BE A GREATER EVIL THAT PRESSES THE GATES OF HUMANKIND, WHO SO CALLOUSLY DISMISS OUR KIND, WHETHER GOOD OR EVIL, IN THIS DAY AND AGE. 'TIS TIME TO LEARN OF IT. COME TO DINNER, SON, AND LET ME TELL YOU THE DARKEST OF TALES!

"WE'LL NEVER BE BEATEN! FOR WE ARE..."

THE AVENGERS

EARTH'S MIGHTIEST SUPER-HEROES!

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